

ABOUT THE GAZETTE

The Griffin Gazette is The Academy at Palumbo's student-run newspaper, dedicated to keeping our community informed about news and events in our school and across Philadelphia. We aim to amplify student voices and spark meaningful conversations.

The Griffin Gazette

WANT TO JOIN?

The Griffin Gazette welcomes any interested students to join our team of dedicated writers, editors, and photographers. Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month in room 329.

NOTHING LESS THAN SUCCESS



SOCCKER SUCCESS

BY BIANCA ARNONE

Palumbo's 2025 boys' soccer season is one to remember. This year's team embodied true brotherly love. The Griffins won the division with an 8-1 record, finishing the season 9-2 overall, including non-decision games. The team showed much improvement from last year. Coach Michalski noted, "Last year they lost a lot of games by one goal, and this year was the complete opposite." Three of their wins even came in overtime.

This season was all about mentality. Coach Michalski, Captains Chacko Scarpelli and Eric Amabile, and players Wes Dingman and Owen Maggione all emphasized that the team's attitude was key to their success. Michalski recalls, "One game we came back from 2 goals down with 10 minutes to play. Not only did we score the goals, but we also scored the game winner in overtime. It was a completely different mindset." This year, the players' focus was on scoring while playing selflessly as a team. The boys never knew when they were going to be put in the game, so they always had to be ready to play on the sidelines.

Michalski is beyond proud of the 2025 squad: "It was great winning the division. The guys were really excited about that and also about moving up to the top division." That's right—the Griffins will be moving up next year! It means they will face tougher competition next season, but they are ready. The playoffs gave the team a preview of next year's opponents, and they handled it well. "The effort from everyone was there," Michalski said. A key contributor was Owen Maggione, who scored over 12 goals this season. The team worked together to get him the ball, allowing him to create scoring opportunities. Michalski also remarked that this was the most skilled team he has ever coached. All these elements combined for an exceptional season.

Captains Senior Chacko Scarpelli and Junior Eric Amabile, supported by Sophomore players Wes Dingman and Owen Maggione, exemplify the team's cohesion. Dingman said the group bonded closely, and the supportive environment helped him improve his skills. "No one was by themselves," he said.

Eric Amabile, a first-time captain, initially felt pressure but quickly adapted. His goals for next season include staying in the first division, winning playoff games, making it to states, and winning a state game. Amabile added, "Last year, we played through our best players rather than as a team, but this year everybody knew their role and gave it their all."

For Senior Captain Chacko Scarpelli, this last high school season was a perfect ending. "It was really nice being a captain my last season, it allowed me to help connect with everybody on the team and come together as a family," he said. Scarpelli plans to continue his soccer career after graduation, hopefully playing in college.

Owen Maggione aims to break his goal record next season, despite the tougher competition in the top division. He praised the leadership of the seniors and the teamwork that made this season successful.

Together, the 2025 season will be remembered not just for the divisional title and the impressive 9-2 record, but as the year the team unlocked their true potential through mindset and brotherhood. The collective commitment from Coach Michalski, captains, and dedicated players transformed near-losses into defining overtime victories, proving that selflessness was the ultimate key to success. As they look ahead to the challenges of the next season, the Griffins are unified and ready to compete, and poised to carry this championship mentality forward.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: ASTER CHAU

BY UNA CUTRONE

Between her work as Senior Class President, protesting the proposed Chinatown arena, and organizing the AAPI Heritage Assembly, Aster Chau has spent much of her high school years advocating for others.

One of Aster's most rewarding tasks was putting on Palumbo's first AAPI Heritage Assembly last May. "It was a super proud moment for me, organizing over 40 performers and a bunch of dances, poems, and different ways for Asian students to express themselves," she said. This was especially meaningful given the previous lack of spaces for Asian American students at Palumbo. To address this, Aster founded PASS, Palumbo Asian Student Solidarity, a group that offers a welcoming environment for Asian students.

Aster's activism extends beyond school. She spent much of last year organizing demonstrations against the proposed 76ers arena in Chinatown. "It was really important to me to help build community in Chinatown," she said.

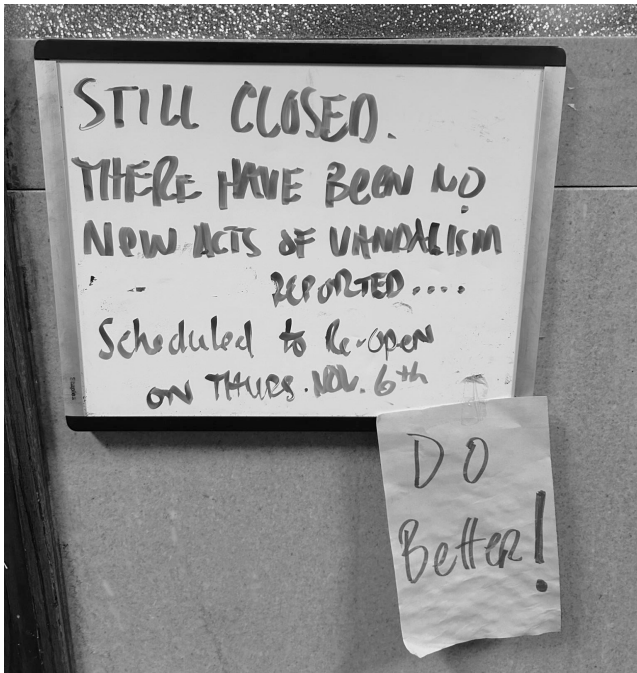


As recently elected Senior Class President, Aster plans to focus on empowering student voices. "It's important to me that students feel heard, and the council is working a lot on increasing student input right now. We are also fundraising to make things like prom and class trips more affordable." As graduation approaches, Aster shares her main goal is "making every Senior feel celebrated."

Looking ahead to next year, Aster says she will miss Palumbo's traditions most. "Palumbo has so many fun little annual traditions, like Fall Feast and the Parade of Horrors. I'll definitely be missing all of these little celebrations that make the community here feel so like tight knit."



A soap dispenser on the ground in the boys' bathroom.



The whiteboard outside of the school store.

BATHROOM BANDIT?

BY AARON COHEN & UNA CUTRONE

If you go to Palumbo, you know the boys' bathrooms are frequently vandalized, often enough that they're locked for days at a time. The closures don't just inconvenience students; they've begun to disrupt multiple parts of school life.

Staff Intervention

Two weeks ago, Palumbo students were called to a boys-only assembly to address a pervasive problem: mistreatment of the bathrooms. While Ms. Thompson has mentioned this mistreatment in prior school-wide assemblies, last week's meeting was the first formal attempt to put a stop to these actions. "It's been shocking and upsetting, what's been happening in the men's bathrooms," said Mr. Remal.

Mr. Shanks continued, specifically addressing the problem of boys throwing soap dispensers out of the bathroom windows. "Imagine going to the bathroom and trying to wash your hands, but you can't because there's no soap. That's trifling."

Closing the School Store

During the boys-only assembly, school staff made it clear that the misbehavior in the bathroom, while it may only be perpetrated

by a few students, will affect all students at Palumbo. "Not only are you affecting yourself, you're affecting the whole school," says Mr. Shanks. This was made especially clear following the closing of the school store. The whiteboard outside of room 305 read, "STILL CLOSED. There have been new acts of vandalism reported. Do better!" While the school store is scheduled to reopen soon, continued mischief may prolong the closure.

Student Reactions

As staff crack down on bathroom misconduct, Palumbo students have responded with frustration, curiosity, and humor. Many have dubbed the unknown culprit the "Bathroom Bandit," a nickname that has quickly spread throughout school. Some students have even taken to social media and AI tools to create jokes about the ongoing issue, according to senior Elizabeth Dorney. "The Bathroom Bandit has transcended past these acts into becoming a cultural symbol of Palumbo," she says.

No matter who you believe the Bathroom Bandit to be, it's important to report acts of vandalism in school. "If we stand by and watch it happen, that's just as bad as the people doing it," says Mr. Remal.

JUNIOR CLASS COUNCIL

BY ELIZABETH DORNEY

This year, Palumbo's junior class shook up its traditional election format. In previous years, students ran in pairs as President and Vice president, and runner-ups were placed on junior class council. This year, however, students were able to run for specific positions such as Treasurer and Secretary, with the Vice Presidency awarded to the presidential runner-up.

Following in the footsteps of the Class of 2026, a large number of juniors stepped forward to represent their peers. The election included two rounds of voting. After the first round, five candidates remained in each race. The presidential finalists were Luka Rivera, Yasmeen Ibrahim, Bianca Arnone, Adam Attanasio, and Makiylah Murphy. The remaining candidates running for Secretary were Caiden Brown, Jade Potts, Meriem Belmehdi, Kira Wilkerson, and Eva Facciabene. Lastly, the Treasurer finalists were Joy Li, Eve Ramos, Hunter Zheng, Abigail Decinque, and Kyle Kurtz.

On October 24th, the finalists were required to deliver a short speech to the Junior class about why they would be best fit to lead the Junior class. These speeches covered topics like junior class prom, student satisfaction, and transparency between student council and the student body. Speaking on her goals for the year, presidential candidate Makiylah Murphy told students, "I will make one promise: with this plan, prom and Junior year will be the best it can be." However,



The junior class council photographed by Sidney Leach.

Makiylah was not the only presidential candidate that made promises about providing students with a great Junior year, with Bianca Arnone expressing, "What I promise is that your voice will matter, your opinions will be heard, and I will do my best to deliver an amazing prom and class trip."

Transparency within student government was another recurring theme in candidates' speeches. Joy Li, running for Treasurer, emphasized responsible leadership, saying, "My goals include having a transparent budget, wise spending, and fundraising." Secretary candidate Jade Potts echoed this idea, declaring, "If you want someone who is honest and will not make empty promises, vote for me."

Candidates also showed their commitment to elevating student voices. Eva Facciabene stated, "Together, I believe we can make Palumbo a school where everyone's voice matters." Luka Rivera also expressed the urge

to include more student work in the building, "I will replace the school's use of AI with student talent," she said, in regards to the school's new AI generated posters on each floor that have received backlash from students.

By the end of the day on the 24th, Palumbo welcomed its new student council: Luka Rivera as President, Makiylah Murphy as Vice President, Joy Li as Treasurer, and Caiden Brown as Secretary. After the results were announced, Luka and Joy shared their appreciation on social media, writing, "Your vote was impactful and is the reason why we got our titles. We envision and hope for a fun and successful junior year as time moves forward!"

The class of 2027, and the entire Palumbo community, is excited to see what this group of students will bring to Palumbo in the next few months. Congratulations to the winners and every junior who stepped up to run!

LUNCHROOM LAUNCH

BY SANTINA RAMUNNO

Recently a cheesy event occurred at Palumbo that not many are aware of. A couple of weeks ago, a Palumbo student threw a cheesesteak from the school lunch outside of the library window. This silly and random act quickly turned serious, however, when the cheesesteak hit a passerby walking outside.

While the victim to the airborne sandwich could not be contacted for this article, it can only be imagined how disorienting and disappointing being hit with a cheesesteak must have been. The individual immediately went inside Palumbo to make sure that the students who threw the cheesesteak were justly reprimanded.

When student Sidney Leach, an eyewitness inside the library when the event occurred, was asked about the incident, she stated that, “I didn’t even realize anything had happened, I was just told I couldn’t leave the library because someone was in trouble.” Sidney was soon dismissed from the library because it was clear she was not the culprit, but lasting impacts remain, even for students who were not involved. Since the incident, students have not been allowed to return to the library to hang out during lunch during fifth period, the time the act took place.

Due to this irresponsible and distasteful waste of a school lunch, students now have less places to enjoy their lunches. So let this be a lesson, do not throw cheesesteaks out of library windows, or better yet any windows at all.



FOOD PANTRY

BY UNA CUTRONE

The recent government shutdown threatened the food security of millions of Americans who rely on food stamps—including many in Philadelphia, where over a third of residents depend on nutrition assistance programs. In response, Palumbo took action by creating a school food pantry. Stocked with donations from students and staff, the pantry serves as a reminder of how communities can support one another during uncertain times.

Although the shutdown has ended, the pantry will remain open. Those wishing to contribute can donate non perishable items in the labeled boxes in history classrooms or drop them off in Room 200.



Students competing for funniest costume at the Parade of Horrors. Photographed by Thea Salera-Okdeh.

PARADE OF HORRORS

BY AHMED AHMED

The Academy at Palumbo Parade of Horrors is an annual event full of Halloween fun for teachers and students. Each year, the faculty chooses a group costume theme, and this time teachers dressed as iconic Cartoon Network characters. The halls were full of laughs as staff appeared as everything from Phineas and Ferb to the cast of Bob’s Burgers.

This year’s parade was especially memorable thanks to the large number of students who entered the costume contest. Participants competed in categories such as Funniest, Most Creative, and Best Impression. Palumbo is no stranger to unforgettable costumes—last year’s standout was a student dressed as Steve Harvey, and this year the audience cheered for Captain Underpants, a group of sharks, and even a Halloween Santa. The energy in the auditorium was nonstop, with students hyping up every costume that stepped on stage.

The event also featured strong performances from Palumbo’s arts programs. The dance team showcased choreography, and Ms. Weinraub’s theater classes also opened the parade with a short performance that captured the Halloween spirit.

The winners of this year’s parade of horror were Halloween Santa for scariest costume, Captain Underpants, for funniest costume, Gon Freecss for best impression, Light Yagami for most creative, as well as Benjamin Franklin and the Sharks for best group costume.

The Parade of Horrors continues to grow each year, bringing more participants, creativity, and enthusiasm from the Palumbo community. It remains one of our most beloved traditions, as an event that brings students together to celebrate Halloween, show off their creativity, and share plenty of laughs. With the bar set high this year, students are already eager to see what next year’s parade will bring.

THE GRIFFIN GRID

BY AARON COHEN

Fill in each box with a Palumbo teacher that meets both qualifications. Answers can be found on the Griffin Gazette bulletin board outside of room 329.

	Wears Glasses	10+ More Years Teaching	Has been moderator of NHS
Teaches English			
Teaches Math			
Teaches Science			



UNDER THE SEA AT PALUMBO

BY SIDNEY LEACH

This year, Palumbo is bringing *The Little Mermaid* to the stage. After gathering input from students involved in last year's production of *Annie*, the musical directors compiled a long list of potential shows, eventually narrowing it down to a final choice that would be exciting, recognizable, and enjoyable for both the cast and the audience.

The art department is very excited for the challenge of making the underwater sets and colorful costumes that this show requires. The selection marks an important step in rebuilding the theatre program. Two years ago, there was no musical due to sabbaticals and changes in the staff that manage the musical. However, our staff are dedicated to building back momentum, and making this year's

program the best one in history.

Over forty students have been cast to act in the show this year, with more assisting in the background on sets, lights, and costumes. Ms. Weinraub, Palumbo's theatre director said, "In my experience, creating theatre together is the quintessential project-based learning." She highlighted that theatre requires teamwork, vulnerability, and trust, helping students learn about themselves while forming meaningful connections with others. As Ms. Weinraub put it, "Theatre changes people's lives and helps us learn about our shared humanity."

Although rehearsals for *The Little Mermaid* have only just begun, it's clear the production is guided with dedication and care. From actors learning their lines to the crew perfecting sets and costumes, every student is contributing to a process that is both educational and creative. The energy in the rehearsal space suggests this year's show will be memorable for both performers and audience alike.

RAKE AND RUIN

BY RIANNA YANG



ON THE FIELD

BY JADE POTTS

It is no surprise that Palumbo students excel in many different fields. On the football field, that is no different. The Griffins have a record of 6 wins and 2 losses this season, including non-conference games. Over the summer, the boys were assigned a new coach, Coach DJ, which made the group adapt to a new team dynamic. Coach DJ has done a great job so far in his newly acquired role. "Being a coach is almost like being a teacher, but on the football field. We prepare all week to take the test on Friday," he said. That being the case, there is no doubt that the team has anything less than straight A's.

Coach DJ also loves the immense involvement that Palumbo has, both academically and athletically. When asked what makes the team so special, he replies, "There's a lot of diversity at Palumbo. Parents being involved with the kids' education and extracurricular activities makes it much easier to coach." It is not hard to find great things about this team.

athlete who is also a part of the boys volleyball team. When asked about the legacy he intends to leave behind after graduating, Kingston answers, "I would like to be seen as a role model that is focused on the tasks ahead." Taking on this leadership role was no issue for Kingston. He is aware of his and his teammates' strengths and weaknesses and knows how to use those to grow.

When asked about his goals as captain, Kingston didn't hesitate to highlight his teammates. "My goal is to show leadership and make sure my underclassmen see ways to succeed not only as an athlete, but as a person." Despite challenges, the team has pushed through together. As Kingston explained, "This team is way different from other years due to our new coaching staff. They make us work extra hard from conditioning to getting our mental health right," adding that the players know what they can achieve when they push each other. He also noted what makes Palumbo athletes stand out. "We are made up of very smart and hardworking students not only on the field, but also in the classroom. It's a priority to have



Coach DJ expressed his gratitude saying, "My favorite part of coaching is seeing the kids' development on and off the field. Plus, they keep me young."

As a team, they all want to win championships. Coach DJ wants that and more: "I always want to win championships, but I also want to make the kids better people off the field." Since the beginning of the season, Coach DJ has tasked all of the captains with responsibilities. The team has to report to them when they are expected to miss or arrive late, and the captains will hold everyone accountable. "It's been a very good system with that."

Kingston Insixiengmay is one of Palumbo's senior captains who has been a part of the team for three years. He is a multi-sport

good grades to be able to play the sport we love; we are student-athletes. Student comes first." Kingston plans to study engineering, and his teammates help him build the skills he'll need. As he put it, "You can't win in football without the greatness of others and that's very similar to engineering. It's important to communicate to make a successful project, just like in football."

It's clear that Kingston and the rest of the Griffins succeed not because of any one player, but because of their commitment to supporting, challenging, and lifting one another up. With strong coaches, dedicated captains, and a hardworking roster, the Griffins continue to build a culture grounded in teamwork.

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COHEN'S CORNER: MORE FALL MOVIE RECS

BY AARON COHEN

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, here are my top movie recommendations to help you get into the fall spirit.

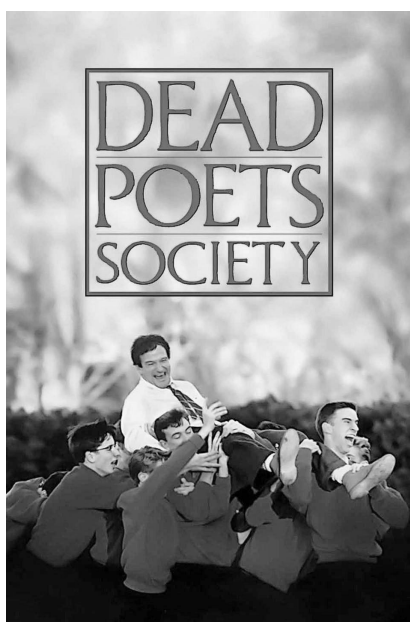
Fantastic Mr. Fox: After learning his wife is pregnant, a clever fox vows to give up stealing from local farmers. Years later, with his son and nephew now grown up, he slips back into old stealing habits—sparking a hunt that puts his family in danger. *Fantastic Mr. Fox* is a great story about family, trust, and instincts, supported by detailed stop motion animation and a great cast of voice actors.



Almost Famous: Set in the 70s, this coming of age story follows 15 year old William, a rock and roll lover who gets a writing assignment from Rolling Stone magazine. Sent to interview a rising band called Stillwater, he travels with the band on their tour and learns the struggles of the music industry and the artists themselves. Closely based on the real life experiences of the director Cameron Crowe, *Almost Famous* explores friendships and becoming one's true self. While being a comedy it also focuses on the bleak and glorified life of rockstars. The young actors do a great job and the soundtrack is incredible.

Trainspotting: Mark Renton belongs to a group of drug addicts in Edinburgh, Scotland. The movie follows Renton as his destructive lifestyle makes it hard for him to reach sobriety. His friend group undermines him and tempts him with drugs as they continue their dysfunctional living situation. *Trainspotting* is a dark comedy and drama that explores the social decay and worst parts of life as an addict. Ewan McGregor as Renton delivers one of his earliest and best performances of his career. It's a funny but gut wrenching movie that is very emotional. The cinematography, music, and performance make it more than worth the watch. The director, Danny Boyle, delivers a call for self addiction, change, and that there is always a chance for redemption.

Dead Poet's Society: In a 1950's prep school known for its ancient traditions and excessive standards, a new English teacher, John Keating played by Robin Williams, shakes things up. Keating uses unorthodox approaches to teach the students and let them think for themselves. While the students deal with expansive pressures from parents, Keating helps students break free from their restraints and seize the day. Director Peter Weir delivers an emotional immersive experience with an incredible performance by the late Robin Williams. Keating's compassionate and unwavering belief in his students leaves an incredible 2 hour experience.



SEASONAL BONDING

BY CATHERINE DORNEY



STEM SHOWCASE

BY CHELSEA MARTIN

This weekend, I had the privilege of attending the Women in Natural Sciences (WINS) showcase at the Academy of Natural Sciences. WINS is a free after-school science enrichment program, which equips female students with the skills needed for future careers in science, specifically engineering and environmental science.

I spoke to one of the heads of the program, Dominique Thomas, who told me about how WINS plays an essential role in integrating women into the STEM field. "Being a mentor to these

young people is a highlight of my journey," Thomas shared. Student interns get to work hands-on with many different fields, and receive incredible opportunities such as study centuries-old museum artifacts or work alongside expert scientists at Drexel University. Last summer, a group of ten WINS students got to study science in South Africa.

Even after graduating from the program, many students come back to help mentor other students, or even work at the museum. All of the staff I talked with were extremely nice and welcoming, and had

supportive relationships with their students. I also got to see the interns come out of their shell by presenting their studies to a room of people. For any female students at Palumbo interested in STEM, WINS is an outstanding opportunity. The program offers once-in-a-lifetime experiences at no cost, and applications can be found on the Academy of Natural Sciences website. After seeing the interns' passion and confidence firsthand, it's clear that WINS doesn't just teach science; the program builds community, confidence, and the next generation of women in STEM.

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